

I urge a rejection of the poison pill amendments, and to pass Shays-Meehan.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to close.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that campaign finance reform come to the floor and be voted on. For that reason, we will not oppose this rule, even though this is an unfair rule, an unusual rule, and a rule structured by the majority to provide the maximum opportunity for mischief and the maximum opportunity to deny the House a direct vote on Shays-Meehan.

This is not a good rule. This is not a fair rule. But the minority has no choice but to permit the process to go forward and attempt to frustrate the majority's mischief by uniting our side with Members on the other side who want true campaign finance reform.

We will support Shays-Meehan. We reluctantly agree that this rule should go forward so the debate may begin.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy, even though it is reluctant, to have the support of Members of the minority for this rule. But I have to tell the Members that they should be enthusiastically supporting it.

Why? Because it is in fact a very fair and balanced rule. In fact, the degree of fairness is greater than what it was when my friends on the other side gave when they were in the majority.

□ 1415

This is something called regular order. Now, our regular order, in fact, says that the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), as chairman of the Committee on Administration, has allowed to move forward the one substitute that was reported favorably from his committee and have that considered as a substitute. We have also chosen to make two other substitutes in order.

As I said in my opening remarks, 26 amendments were submitted to the Committee on Rules. Of those, we have made in order 13. One amendment was offered by a Democrat, and that amendment was made in order. So my Democratic colleagues have had every amendment that they submitted to the Committee on Rules made in order under this measure.

So it is a very fair rule. It is what is known as regular order. There is no poison pill involved in here. We are following regular order, which is exactly what Speaker HASTERT said when he stood in this well on the opening day of the 106th Congress. So I urge my colleagues to support the rule.

I will say that I am one who does believe very, very strongly in the importance of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. I think that the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) is

right on target in trying to provide a wide array of information to the American people as they look at the prospect of choosing their leaders.

The issue of campaign finance reform is important. It is important for us to make sure that we do everything that we can to protect and nurture that First Amendment to the Constitution. That is the reason that I am supportive of the Doolittle substitute, and I will be supporting the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) in his effort.

I know there has been a lot of talk about what the level of public interest is in this issue, and clearly there are some people who want to spend a lot of time focused on it. I do not think that we should be legislating based solely on what is the highest rated poll item. But I will say this, the issue of campaign finance reform is not quite as important as some of my colleagues have said.

When the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) talked about this being such an important issue, a decisive issue, as we juxtapose it to the Civil War, it seems to me that there are a wide range of important things that have taken place betwixt the Civil War and today, ranking all the way from the Second World War to the civil rights legislation, which was very, very important for our country. As the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) has just reminded me, we had a man who walked on the moon 3 decades ago. So there are lots of things that are important.

We are, because of the level of interest that exists in this body, proceeding with consideration of this campaign finance reform measure under regular order, and I look forward to a free-flowing and stimulating debate.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1059, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1999

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-316) on the resolution (H. Res. 288) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the Senate bill (S. 1059) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2000 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1655, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMONSTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1999

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-317) on the resolution (H. Res. 289) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1655) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for the civilian energy and scientific research, development, and demonstration and related commercial application of energy technology programs, projects, and activities of the Department of Energy, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1551, CIVIL AVIATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-318) on the resolution (H. Res. 290) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1551) to authorize the Federal Aviation Administration's civil aviation research and development programs for fiscal years 2000 and 2001, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA). Pursuant to House Resolution 283 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 417.

□ 1420

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 147) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to reform the financing of campaigns for elections for Federal office, and for other purposes, with Mr. HOBSON in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) be permitted to control 11 minutes of my time and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) be permitted

to control 9 minutes of my time during the general debate.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, reserving the right to object, what would then be the time division? The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) would remain with how many minutes?

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Chairman, that would leave 10 minutes.

Mr. THOMAS. Eleven, nine, and ten.

Mr. Chairman, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS).

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, as we enter into this debate, I do think it is important to listen to ourselves. The chairman of the Committee on Rules made reference to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) in terms of this particular vote being the most important vote to occur in this society since the Civil War. That statement is just silly. But I am much more concerned about statements made such as, "The American people believe we have a rigged and corrupt system." Or "Elected officials have been bought and paid for."

To the degree that those are presented as factual statements, I can assure my colleagues, any evidence that would prove that I would love to have it in my possession. The Federal Election Commission would love to have it. I believe these are basically rhetorical comments about what they believe to be the situation.

Well, I can assure my colleagues, if that is going to be the level of debate, if anybody disagrees with the Shays-Meehan supporters, they are therefore corrupt or that if they believe firmly that substantive differences offered in substitutes are not honestly represented, then I think we are going to have characterized on the floor of the House one of the fundamental problems we have in the area of campaign reform and that is some people believe that what they are advocating is not only perfect, but truth, that simply by positing it, everyone else in the system is somehow less than they are if they do not agree with it.

One of the things I think we need to establish at the beginning of this debate is that people can honestly differ and not be sinister, not be corrupt, not try to rig the system. Frankly, I think the supporters of Shays-Meehan have to get over hurdle number one, and that is go back to the definitive Supreme Court case dealing with this era of campaign reform and explain to many of us why Shays-Meehan is not simply, absolutely, flat-out unconstitutional.

Because back in 1976, the court said, "We agree that, in order to preserve the provision against invalidation on vagueness grounds, that the Federal Election Campaign Act definition must be construed to apply only to expenditures for communications that in express terms advocate the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate for Federal office."

The courts have held to that position consistently. All one has to do is look at some recent cases. Only go back to 1988. Shays-Meehan section 201 is unconstitutional based upon the decision in the Right to Life of Dutchess County versus the FEC. Section 206 of Shays-Meehan is patently unconstitutional in the 1999 decision FEC versus the Christian Coalition.

We are going to be talking about money spent in the system, and they are just absolutely concerned about "soft money." Well, then, why do they not focus on the need to change the hard money provisions? Those were set back in the 1970s. This year in Nixon versus Shrink Wrap, in the 8th Circuit Court, overturned Missouri's \$1,000 contribution limit as being so low that it impaired free speech.

I think it is fairly ironic that, when we look at this legislation, the question I think we really ought to address is whether or not the supporters of Shays-Meehan have a problem with other Members of the House of Representatives duly elected presenting their position and their constituents' position or whether or not they have a problem with the Supreme Court of the United States that somehow stubbornly believes that the First Amendment requires some degree of privilege; and that rather than follow the slippery slope of it sounds like, it may be, it appears to be, it ought to be campaign speech, the court very rightly bright-lined the test, express advocacy.

My colleagues can shop around it, they can sneak around it, but we will deny people the freedom of speech only if it is express advocacy.

Frankly, in many sections of the Shays-Meehan bill, it trumps all over, it trumps all over people's individual First Amendment freedoms. There is no question that, if this legislation became law, major sections of Shays-Meehan would be declared unconstitutional. We have gone down this route before. Let us not go down it again. Let us talk about passing legislation that can actually become law and begin to make changes.

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1½ minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think the debate here today is about whether the system here is broken. I think, fortunately, that debate is over. This system is broken. This system is rancid. It needs repair.

I do not think the debate here today is about constitutionality. We know, those of us who proudly support Shays-Meehan, that we are about to pass a constitutional bill.

But let me set forth some facts here. In the 1991-1992 election cycle, \$86 million in soft money was raised and spent by both political parties. By 1996, that number had exploded to \$260 million. In next year's election cycle, it appears that may reach an unprecedented level of \$500 to \$750 million.

This is a system out of control. This is an example of excess. Control is moving further and further away from people and more and more in the hands of special interests. Those are the facts.

The same problem is developing with respect to the sham issue ads. The argument that we are having to debate here on the floor of the House of Representatives is whether people in this country who have special interests before Congress should have a right to anonymous political advertising. These groups on the right and left are so ashamed of their ads, they are unwilling to put their names on it.

As a result, the voters are disenfranchised because they are misled, they are deceived, they do not know whose voice they are hearing that is telling them how to vote for a particular candidate.

These are the merits we are going to defeat today. We need to defeat amendments like the Doolittle amendment that are designed to gut this bill.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, it is my privilege to yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) who, from the day that he set foot in this Chamber, has been for responsible campaign reform.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me this time, and I thank him for his leadership on this issue, who has been very mainstream and careful about his approach to it.

The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) mentioned the Nixon case in Missouri that it set contribution limits of \$1,000, and the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals said that that is too onerous and set that aside. Now that is going to be at the United States Supreme Court level, but it raises a problem.

The Supreme Court has said that contribution limits are constitutional, that it is certainly fair and reasonable for this body to determine that there is an appearance of impropriety or concern about the appearance of corruption and, therefore, we can set contribution limits. But we know that we set those in 1974.

Since then, they have been eroded by inflation to the value is only \$300 today. So now the courts are taking a fresh look at this and saying, are those contributions limits constitutional in today's atmosphere and in today's economy?

So I think that it is important that we protect the role of the individual by having contribution limits but at the same time making sure they are indexed for inflation so that they do not continue to erode.

During this debate, we will be offering the Hutchinson substitute sponsored by many of my former freshmen colleagues. In that, we are the only proposal that actually increases the role of the individual by indexing limits to the rate of inflation. I think that is real progress. It will assure the constitutionality of the limits that we place in terms of contributions.

□ 1430

My good friend from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) who has been such an ally in understanding the need for reform, and I agree with him, there is the need for reform in our society; but he mentioned that we should be ashamed of anonymous ads out there.

If we go back to Thomas Payne and ask him about anonymous pamphleteering, he would say that is a basic freedom that we have. We put out information, and I think every group, they should be able to identify who they are and how much money they are spending. I think that is relevant information for the American public. But what is wrong, and this is proposed in the Shays-Meehan bill, is that we go into their contributor list, we go in and say, who gave to you, and restrict how much these groups can raise and where they get their money and make sure they disclose it.

The NAACP challenged this one time and said that we do not want to disclose our contributor list because they could be intimidated, during the civil rights era. The United States Supreme Court said, that is right, we cannot disclose the donors to a group like that.

Let us do not erode that freedom that we have by going in and saying that we want to disclose the contributors to every group that is out there.

So the bill that we are offering that will be in the debate accomplishes the main objectives of banning soft money to the federal parties.

Secondly, it increases information to the public, but it does not trounce upon the Constitution of the United States.

As candidates, we do not like criticism and ads ran against us. But does our discomfort justify restraining the freedom of others? I think the answer is no.

The Hutchinson substitute does not trounce upon the Constitution. It provides strong, reasonable reform that can pass this body, that can go to the Senate and have a better chance of capturing the vote. I believe that is the direction that we should go. I compliment all of my colleagues that have been moving toward reform and showing the American people that we can accomplish this in the United States Congress.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Chairman, let me thank, first of all, the author of the bill and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) for their leadership on this issue.

We dealt with this in the Florida legislature back in 1992. We reduced the amount of money that PACs and individuals could give. And everybody said at that time Armageddon. It will not work.

My colleagues, let me just tell all those listening: the Republican party actually won. They are in control of the House, the Senate, and the Governor's mansion. So our party should not fear this issue. Because I think the voters recognize there is a significant problem in politics today, and it is called money. Money influences politics.

This is not unreasonable. This does not limit free speech. This is not Armageddon, political suicide, unilateral disarmament. I think we are fighting a war rather than a sensible discussion on campaign finance reform.

So I urge all of my colleagues as they are listening today to think about the average individual.

Yes, I have heard from my side of the aisle that people at town hall meetings do not bring up campaign finance reform. Of course they would not. Why would they? They want to know what is happening on crime, education, health care, things that matter to their lives. But if we ask them one stand-alone question, Do you think campaign finance influence politics? they would give us a resounding "yes."

Let us fix the system. Shays-Meehan does it. I am proud to support it.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), a leader in the effort to pass meaningful campaign finance reform.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support for the bipartisan Shays-Meehan bill.

I would first like to commend the authors of the bill, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), for their extraordinary consistent leadership. They have worked selflessly along with a bipartisan coalition.

The American people strongly believe that money should play less of a role in American politics, that candidates should be elected on the strength of their ideas and not the depths of their war chests.

Campaign finance reform is not just about one issue. It is about every issue that Congress considers: gun safety, patients' bill of rights, minimum wage. And the American people know it.

Shays-Meehan will significantly reduce the role of special interests and money in American politics. Let us show the American people that our Government is not for sale, that our elections are not auctions to the highest spender. Vote for Shays-Meehan and campaign finance reform.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 10 seconds.

Mr. Chairman, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) talked about campaign war chests. Those are basi-

cally hard money. They are, in fact, totally hard money, not soft money. Sometimes we get carried away with our rhetoric. She is referring to something which is not at issue in this bill.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER.)

(Mr. BEREUTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, campaign finance reform is far afield from my committee assignments; but I think I, like every Member of the House, must focus on this issue because it is of fundamental importance to the American political system.

The way that we conduct our affairs here, what we do and what we do not do, is so often related to campaign finance issues. More importantly, I think, much beyond that is the fact that the citizens' perception of the relationship between campaign finance and the way their elected representatives vote and perform is very negative. They have a view that the current campaign finance system causes us to fail to act in their interest.

That is causing a corrosive effect upon our system. We need to deal with it. Both parties know that we need to have campaign finance reform. Neither, however, is willing to give up the particular special advantages that that party has in the current system or process.

Now, back in the last Congress in which I served in the minority, we had, I believe, a very extensive, thorough task force effort to begin to focus on what changes were needed in campaign finance reform. It is the basis of much of the legislation that I have introduced or cosponsored over the years.

Our failure to reduce the disproportionate impact of money in elective politics is, my friends, having a corrosive effect upon the American political process. It contributes to suspicion and skepticism among our citizens. Furthermore, there is more than enough blame to go around for both parties.

I would like to focus just on two elements here. First, I would say, with respect to the Shays-Meehan bill, I think that, unfortunately, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) is right that some aspects of that legislation are indeed unconstitutional. But what disappoints me about our two colleagues who have introduced this legislation is that they have ignored the action of the House twice now on the subject of campaign contributions from noncitizens and from people that are not U.S. nationals.

This House has expressed itself, saying that the elections, specifically the campaign contributions process leading up to it, should be reserved for citizens and U.S. nationals, like those from American Samoa for example.

When these two distinguished colleagues said they made minor adjustments in the legislation they reintroduced in this Congress, they specifically did not do what the House had instructed them to do by a wide majority vote: restrict contributions to Federal campaigns to U.S. citizens and U.S. voters. And we know that the American people expect that prohibition is or should be law. This is a loophole that became very apparent in the course of the last presidential campaign, and we have a responsibility to deal with that issue.

The charges against the Bereuter-Wicker amendment are not true. I will show in the course of the debates on the Wicker-Bereuter amendment that, in fact, the arguments against it are not valid, or are not procedurally correct.

I also want to say, as a representative from a State that has a low population, that citizens of our State are very disturbed about the fact that in recent elections in our State more than half of the money to elect a U.S. senator has come from outside the State. Indeed, in one of our races, over half the money came in from the State of California. In a recent open-seat election in the State of South Dakota, the most expensive Senate race per capita in history was from that constituency. Indeed the greatest proportion of money came in from other states. This is resented by the citizens of that state. It is not a proper approach. We need to limit the majority of the amount of money coming into House races and Senate races to contributions from citizens of those congressional districts and the respective states.

I urge my colleagues to support the Bereuter-Wicker amendment and the Calvert amendment.

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY).

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Chairman, as I was thinking about campaign finance reform last night, I also thought a little bit about the football game. Just imagine the headlines if teams started contributing to referees based on how that referee called their games. Sports fans everywhere would be absolutely outraged.

But our democracy is in the exact same quandary. Every Member of this chamber knows that millions of dollars can flow in and out of campaigns from soft money sources depending on how we call the game in Congress.

As a result, the family checkbook is playing a smaller role in our democracy. Special interests are gaining more influence than ever over who is in office, what they support, and what types of bills this Congress passes. Frankly, this is not what democracy is all about.

I realize that money and campaigns are impossible to totally separate, but a fair and open campaign finance system can exist if we support the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill.

We have the opportunity to do that today. Please do not support the poison pill amendments. Please support the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) has remaining versus the three that are dividing up the other time.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) has 17¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) has 7½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) has 10 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD).

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise as a cosponsor and strong supporter of the bipartisan Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill.

The American people want us to be honest and fair, to play by the rules. That is why we need to eliminate soft money, which is clearly the biggest cancer on our political system, a cancer that has undermined people's trust in the system and many elected officials.

Soft money is not honest. It is obviously a way to circumvent campaign contribution limits. Soft money raises at least the perception of undue influence on elections and candidates. It is time to ban soft money and erase the suspicion that Washington is for sale to the highest bidder.

Also, Mr. Chairman, the so-called issue advocacy ads in many cases are nothing more than a sham, and we all know it. They are a way to avoid accountability and a way to avoid contribution limits. In short, they do not play by the rules, either.

Let us do the right thing today for the American people. Let us restore trust and accountability in our political process. I urge my colleagues to resist the poison pill amendments and pass the clean Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) who, when she got elected in the last session, the very first bill when she got elected to take the place of her husband in the Congress was a sign-on to the Shays-Meehan bill.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, I congratulate the authors of all the bills before us today. There are some good provisions in the various substitutes being offered, but that is what those bills are, a substitute for the real thing, a substitute for real reform.

Every major reform organization in this country agrees that the Shays-

Meehan bill is the one bill which can restore integrity to our campaign finance system. It is the only proposal that deals with the two biggest problems in our federal elections, soft money and sham issue ads.

It is unfortunate that here we are again discussing the merits of Shays-Meehan versus other proposals. A year ago we debated many of these same proposals, and we passed Shays-Meehan by a vote of 252 to 179.

The House has already decided that Shays-Meehan is the bill we want to send to the Senate. None of these substitutes deal with the problem of sham issue ads, which allow powerful interest groups to pour unlimited, unregulated dollars, often from unknown sources, into our campaigns.

□ 1445

These ads clearly advocate the election or defeat of a particular candidate but are not subject to present campaign finance regulations.

Last year, as was mentioned, I endured four grueling elections and watched as wave after wave of attack ads flooded my district under the guise of informing voters. These ads distorted both my record and the record of my opponent.

The Shays-Meehan bill effectively ends the misuse of issue advertising. It does so by requiring all ads which clearly urge the support or defeat of a candidate in a Federal election to be treated like what they are, political ads.

Let us restore the public's trust in our political system. We need to pass the Shays-Meehan bill and send it to the Senate today.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I would remind the gentlewoman that the Supreme Court has said that expenditures for communications that in express terms advocate the election or defeat of a clearly identifiable candidate, and that only.

The statement she just made proves that Shays-Meehan is unconstitutional.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the distinguished majority whip.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman's comments. It also proves that Shays-Meehan is nothing more than incumbent protection.

Mr. Chairman, it continues to amaze me that Members of Congress, newspapers and "senior scholars" continue to advocate limiting free speech and prohibiting citizens from criticizing government officials and incumbents in the name of "campaign reform."

The first amendment, America's premier political reform, was not written for pornographers or flag burners. It was drafted to allow citizens to petition and criticize their government. But Shays-Meehan would stifle free speech and end criticism of elected officials at critical stages of the election process.

Make no mistake about it. Shays-Meehan guts the first amendment, threatens citizen participation in the political process, and ends the ability of citizen groups to educate the public unless they file bureaucratic paperwork with the Federal Government. All things considered, this is the mother of all government regulation, because it attempts to control the political process and limits freedom just to protect incumbents.

The Shays-Meehan bill will erect a Byzantine set of laws and over 275 new government regulations that will gag citizens' speech. These attacks on issue advocacy through statute and regulation have repeatedly been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and other lower Federal courts. The high Court has always viewed issue advocacy as a form of speech that deserves the very highest degree of protection under the first amendment. That Court has not only been supportive of issue advocacy, it is untroubled by the fact that issue advertisements may influence the outcome of elections.

In *Buckley v. Valeo*, the Justices stated, and I quote, "the first amendment denies government the power to determine that spending to promote one's political views is wasteful, excessive or unwise."

The Court continues to state that it is the people, individually and collectively, some people call them special interests, but they are people, they are American citizens, individually and collectively in associations and committees who should retain control of the debate.

Some try to argue that free speech is not an issue here. But the free speech implications of the legislation are very clear. For example, Shays-Meehan supporter and House minority leader Richard Gephardt has said that we cannot have both freedom of speech and healthy campaigns in a healthy democracy.

Mr. Chairman, we must have both. Freedom and reform are not mutually exclusive principles. Shays-Meehan gives us neither. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" against Shays-Meehan.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL).

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Chairman, my good friends and colleagues seem to have thought that the Supreme Court ended its jurisprudence with *Buckley v. Valeo* in 1976. Ten years later, the Supreme Court ruled in *FEC v. Massachusetts Citizens for Life*, and I quote:

The fact that this message is marginally less direct than "Vote for Smith" does not change its essential nature. The Edition goes beyond issue discussion to express electoral advocacy. The disclaimer of endorsement cannot negate this fact. . . . The "Special Edition" thus falls squarely within [the law] . . . for it represents express advocacy of the election of particular candidates. . . . 479 U.S. 238, 249-250 (1986).

Even though it did not say the magic words "Vote for Smith."

And also as the Supreme Court said 10 years after *Buckley v. Valeo*, and I quote,

We have consistently held that restrictions on contributions require less compelling justification than restrictions on independent spending. 479 U.S. 238, 259-260 (1986).

In Shays-Meehan, we have a restriction that contributions raised outside of the \$1,000 per person maximum, cannot show up in the funds that go for express advocacy television advertising. It is a restriction on the source of our money. On these two constitutional points, let us not make a mistake referring to *Buckley v. Valeo* as the last word.

I conclude with these two points. The Supreme Court said you can control contributions much more freely than you can control expenditure. The other side only quotes that it is hard to impose restrictions on expenditure. And, secondly, in *FEC v. Massachusetts Citizens for Life*, the Supreme Court said, it is the content, the effect, not the magic words. The words kill, the spirit giveth life.

Vote for Shays-Meehan.

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, I rise today as president of the freshman class and as a strong supporter of the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill.

We need to get back to some common sense and to what folks are thinking back in their homes. When they watch their TV set and they see the unlimited independent expenditures and the so-called issue advocacy ads, when they open their mailbox and vicious propaganda comes spewing out, they know in their hearts that something is desperately wrong with the current system.

If we ask our voters a couple of questions, we know what the answers should be: Do you want your elected representatives to spend more time on the phone begging for dollars or more time with their constituents and studying issues? Do you want unlimited amounts of external money from untraceable sources to influence the outcome of your election or do you want the character and the knowledge and the ability of the candidates in competition to influence the outcome of the election? Do you want the legislative process to be skewed by big dollars or to be determined by the merits of the argument? That is what is at stake here. It is that simple.

Shays-Meehan may not be perfect, but it is pretty darn good, and it is the best we have had coming down the pipe in a long time. The American people know in their hearts it is time to fix this system. As President of the freshman class, I urge my colleagues to support Shays-Meehan.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), a leader in our effort to pass campaign finance reform.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I read earlier an ad in a Senate race from the State of Washington paid for by the Democratic Party. Now an ad from the Republican Party in Kentucky in a Senate race.

Voice: "We all know Scotty Baesler voted to export thousands of Kentucky jobs to Mexico, what with that NAFTA trade deal."

Voice of Mexican actor: "Muchas gracias, Señor Baesler."

Voice: "But he also voted to give China special trade privileges, even though they're shutting out Kentucky-made products."

In Chinese: "Thank you, Scotty Baesler."

"And now he wants," the voice says, "to give U.S. tax dollars to the U.N."

In a multiple foreign language voice or voices, "Thank you, Scotty Baesler."

And then in writing on the screen, "Tell Scotty Baesler to start putting Kentucky first."

If it had said "defeat Scotty Baesler" it's under Federal regulations. Because that one word is left out, although the whole atmosphere of that ad is a campaign ad, it falls outside of Federal regulations. Express advocacy is the test and that is express advocacy, that ad.

No one is accusing opponents of Shays-Meehan of being corrupt. They are defending a corrupting system. Sure the public does not run up and say to us, "Vote for Shays-Meehan." And one reason is because they are cynical that this Congress will ever act. It is time for us to respond to that cynicism. It is time for us to act. Vote for Shays-Meehan.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute and 10 seconds to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO).

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of this legislation, and I want to extend my special thanks to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN). We came into the Congress together. He has been a great colleague. If we had paid attention to him on campaign finance reform and independent counsel, this country would be in eminently better shape.

The American people want us to pass this. Why? Because they want to believe in their government, in the institution of the Congress. We continue to do less and less on this issue, and their faith in their government, in this institution of the Congress, in this place that is supposed to be the House of the people, they believe in less and less. Why? Because they know that money has more and more and more to do with the decisions that come out of this place.

The House of Representatives can distinguish itself by doing the right thing for the American people. Do we not try to engage our constituents to participate in our campaigns? They are

doing so less and less. They are engaging less and less because they know that money has more and more to do with what goes on here.

Today, this vote can inject more confidence in the system. We should comport ourselves the way our Founding Fathers and Mothers would. Pass this needed legislation.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Shays-Meehan measure.

Mr. Chairman, this legislation will close the soft money loophole which currently allows unlimited, regulated funds from corporations, labor unions, and wealthy individuals to be funneled into to Federal election campaigns. In addition, it will clarify that it is illegal to raise any money—hard or soft—from foreigners or on government property.

As a member of the Government Reform Committee which has been investigating the alleged campaign abuses of the 1996 Presidential election, it has become obvious that it is the soft money system, the illegal raising of foreign money, and the illegal fundraising on government property that was the source of most of the alleged abuses and the principal device by which our current election laws were evaded.

By supporting Shays-Meehan this Congress can outlaw practices that the White House helped to prefect during the 1996 election cycle to make certain that they never can happen again.

I regret that Congress has been unable to approve or even consider an meaningful campaign reform measure until now. However, I am gratified and I look forward to the consideration of real campaign finance reform.

It is important that we effectively restore public confidence in our political system by eliminating the current protection for special interests, and address the growing problem of "soft money".

Accordingly, although I am disappointed that this legislation fails to limit PAC contributions, I support the Shays-Meehan reform measure since it is the only measure that will provide real campaign finance reform by banning soft money and clarifying the illegal fundraising of foreign funds.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support the Shays-Meehan Bill.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

Mr. WAMP. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, we are now at the heart of the substantive debate and the general debate for a bill that makes significant progress to improve the current system. Since 1991, I have either been a candidate for election or reelection to the U.S. House of Representatives and filed the necessary paperwork. All the money that I raise and spend is regulated by the Federal Government. Should we in any way restrict what a candidate who files, who

puts their life on the line and their body in the arena, so to speak, should they ever be restricted in what they say, whenever, however or whoever they talk about? Absolutely not. But we are going to talk about today whether or not these outside groups who call themselves citizens for motherhood and apple pie should live under the same rules that I do as a candidate, or that you might as a candidate.

Candidates should be able to speak and groups should be able to speak and we should all come under the same rules so the American people have some accountability to look to on who they are and who is pulling their strings.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON), a leader in our effort to pass campaign finance reform in a bipartisan way.

□ 1500

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

I rise in strong support of the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill. We need to restore public confidence and accountability to our federal election system, and Shays-Meehan will advance these goals most effectively and forthrightly.

In addition to a ban on soft money, the bill closes one of the biggest loopholes in our current system of campaign finance laws by simply imposing the same rules, the same standards of public reporting, on groups that fund issue ads as we impose on candidates.

In recent elections we have watched special interest money go to campaign issue ads in congressional elections across the country. One study shows that between 275 and 340 million special interest dollars were spent on these ads in the 1997 to 1998 election cycle, yet no citizen could find out who contributed those dollars spent on these ads, though they can find out every dollar, who contributed every dollar to any candidate running in a federal election.

Shays-Meehan will simply clamp down on these special interest dollars, Mr. Chairman, and I urge support for this important election reform.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER).

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, the time has come to take the for-sale sign off the door of the United States Congress. The public's trust and confidence in government has been seriously eroded by a system that allows big money to have too much influence on the political process.

Mr. Chairman, we currently have a broken system of campaign finance. There are two ways to give, hard money which honors the intent of the law to limit contributions and disclose the source, and the other way, soft money, which skirts the law and allows unlimited amounts to be given from undisclosed sources. No wonder most

Americans no longer believe government to be of, by, and for the people; and the problem is getting worse.

In the 1992 cycle there was \$86 million raised in soft money, in 1996 it climbed to \$262 million, and in 2000 it is estimated to be \$500 million or more; and no one benefits from the corrupting influence of soft money. The donors do not like the constant pressure or the shake-down to donate soft money, the political candidates do not like to be ambushed by soft money, and most importantly, the citizens of this Nation do not like the influence of soft money.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 15 seconds.

I find it amazing that the First Amendment protections are now called a loophole. Perhaps it is a good idea that we are just voting on campaign reform because, if the Bill of Rights was on the floor, I would fear for its continued support.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 4½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE), someone who has been an active participant in terms of making sure that the First Amendment is defended.

(Mr. DOOLITTLE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I find it fascinating to hear these same canned speeches given again and again identifying the so-called problem as a lack of adequate regulation. These people that are bringing to us today Shays-Meehan, it is these very same people and their philosophy which created this very problem. But for their regulation, we would never have heard of soft money.

Does anyone remember a few years ago? I certainly do because it was an issue in my campaign in 1990 and in 1992. Then the focus of their attack was hard money and the form of PACs, the political action committees, another spawn of the regulation that they gave us. This does not work, and it will never work, and Shays-Meehan is trying to tighten the screws a little further and put more limitations over here and box people in over there, and it will not work.

The Supreme Court recognized that years ago in the Buckley case. I will just quote from it. It said it "would naively underestimate the ingenuity and resourcefulness of persons and groups desiring to buy influence to believe that they would have much difficulty devising expenditures that skirted the restriction on express advocacy of election or defeat but nevertheless benefited the candidates' campaign."

The Supreme Court anticipated this very clearly, and obviously the profusion of soft money has fulfilled what they anticipated.

But they did not write the statute, the Congress did. It is their limits on hard dollars that have never been adjusted, that have been eroded by two-

thirds the purchasing power of the dollar that has given rise to soft money.

Furthermore, there is nothing wrong with soft money. It is the constitutional rights of groups to engage in political debate and in free speech. That is not a loophole. But big-government liberals like Senator Bradley, for example, has repeatedly talked about this problem of involvement in the political process as keeping ants out of the kitchen. Do my colleagues know what we do with ants that are in the kitchen? We wipe them out, and that is what Senator Bradley and Vice President GORE and all the other big-government thinkers would like to do to Americans' precious right to engage in unfettered political speech, the very thing the First Amendment was designed to protect.

Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech, and Senator MCCAIN and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and Mr. FINEGOLD and Senator Bradley and a host of others have come forth with bills designed to do exactly that, to abridge our precious, God-given freedom of speech.

It would be a nightmare to pass a law that placed in doubt whatever political communication we had. It would be a complete disaster, such as the Shays-Meehan bill does, to make it in doubt whether what is being said falls within what is permissible because it is subject to a totality test or reasonableness test. Indeed, this will severely crimp political debate at the very time when people most want to get information, and in this information-weary age, when people tune out from politics just about the whole time except just before the election, Shays-Meehan kicks in and severely restricts what kinds of communications can go on.

I would just call to everyone's attention, and I have distributed here a great editorial especially for people who think of themselves as conservatives or Republicans called Campaign Finance Charade. This article details why this whole scheme of regulation is really designed to disadvantage conservative ideas and to advantage left wing ideas. That is what the present regulation we have was designed to do, and it worked great for 20 years.

Mr. Chairman, this is a charade. Big-government regulation does not work anywhere. We know that. And it certainly does not work in campaigns. If it did work, we would not be having this debate today because everything would be fine in this country, and the fact of the matter is it has become a Rube Goldberg network of complication that will only be worse and made more complicated by Shays-Meehan. I urge defeat of that proposal and passage of the one proposal that takes us in the other direction, which is H.R. 1922.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 20 seconds to say that the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) is right. This is about not buying elections. It is about making sure

that that cannot happen in a democratic form of government and making sure that everyone plays by the same rules. It does not restrict speech. It provides for all the speech my colleagues want under the campaign laws.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL).

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Chairman, in 1978 the Supreme Court upheld limits on how much individuals could contribute. In that opinion which has been cited so often, Buckley versus Valeo, the Court also dealt with the \$5,000 limit on how much PACs could give; and the court upheld that, too. They said if they did not uphold it, we would have just the possibility of subterfuge, because the same individual could give to the PAC, and then the 1,000 limit would mean nothing.

The Supreme Court in that case cited by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), and the other good friends who have spoken against Shays-Meehan, says, "Rather than undermining freedom of association, the basic provision enhances the opportunity of bona fide groups to participate in the election process. . . ."

So today we go the next step to avoid the evasion of these limits through soft money and through advertisement where the exact same words as in a candidate's ad are said, but they do not exactly say "vote for." Then there is no limit. We must close the loophole. If the Supreme Court upheld the limitation of 1,000 per individual, 5,000 per PAC, and an absolute ban on corporations and unions, surely they would uphold a limitation on as huge an end-run as soft money constitutes.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds.

The previous speaker, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) talked about Bradley and GORE and all of these government centrists, liberals. Let me cite from an opinion in McIntyre versus Ohio Board of Elections by a couple of real regulators, Justice Scalia and Rehnquist. The First Amendment provides that the Government may not prohibit the expression of an idea. The disclosure law here by contrast forbids the expression of no idea, but merely requires identification of the speaker when the idea is uttered in the electoral context. That is Scalia and Rehnquist.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Ms. RIVERS).

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Chairman, for some reason this debate always moves me to use literary reference to illustrate my point. Last Congress I relied on Dr. Seuss and his work, *The Cat in the Hat*. This year, as I contemplated this upcoming argument, I was struck by the similarities between the continuing debate here in this House on campaign finance reform and a story by Edgar Allan Poe, the *Telltale Heart*. In that short story, Poe tells of a dastardly murder in which the murderer is un-

done by the fact that the victim's heart continues to beat after the terrible deed is done and the body has been dismembered and hidden. In this excerpt that I wish to share with my colleagues the murderer is being questioned by the police. Observe his tactics as he tries to shift attention away from his own guilt.

"No doubt I now grew very pale, but I talked more fluently and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased. What could I do? I gasped for breath, and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly, more vehemently, but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles in a high key and with violent gesticulations, but the noise steadily increased. I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides as if excited to fury by the observations of the men, but the noise steadily increased. I foamed, I raved, I swore, but it grew louder and louder and louder, and the men chatted pleasantly and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? All mighty God, they have heard, they suspected, they knew."

Mr. Chairman, opponents of Shays-Meehan have successfully killed this bill in the past, but each time its heart has lived on. This year opponents will try again, but just like in the tell tale heart, no matter how loud the voices grow, no matter how vigorously the arguments are made, the heart of reform will keep beating, and it will condemn those who seek to do it violation.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly was not a lit major in college, but my recollection of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Telltale Heart*, was that the heart beating was in his head, that in fact it was a dream, it was a myth. It was not reality, and I think the gentleman's point is excellent if, in fact, that is the case that she is making, that in fact there was no true heartbeat. There is no true problem here.

Let me also say that my friend from California (Mr. CAMPBELL) complaining that we use Buckley versus Valeo in the support for soft money just used it for hard money, and I would love to ask the gentleman if the Dow Jones average was about 800 in 1978, and of course it is about 10 times that amount now, would he support an increase in hard dollar amounts?

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. THOMAS. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Chairman, I would indeed be pleased to include an increase in hard dollar amounts as part of a comprehensive package that bans soft money. Would the gentleman from California?

Mr. THOMAS. I would tell the gentleman at every opportunity to place that in Shays-Meehan and did not do it. It certainly would be more attractive if it was a fair, even-handed approach to dealing with dollars in the

system instead of what amounts to a choking down of available dollars.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY).

□ 1515

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Chairman, my mom came to visit over the Labor Day weekend to see our new baby boy, and I told her that in my second term I still pinch myself every day that I have the opportunity to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is such a privilege, but one of my fears is that we are drifting away from a citizen Congress, a citizen Congress that our Founding Fathers and Mothers envisioned for us.

The cost of an open competitive campaign for Congress these days is just a little less than a million dollars, and it is doubling about every 4 years or so.

My fear is that there are a lot of good people in my community who will never raise their hands to run for Congress because they do not have a million dollars. They do not even know where they can find a million dollars laying around. I do not think the very wealthy can make great decisions for us. It is just that for a representative democracy like ours, I do not want to wake up some day and find out that a lot of good people who would make great decisions in Congress cannot ever run because of the cost factor.

I want to return to a citizen Congress. That is why I am a cosponsor with the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) of the Campaign Integrity Act we are voting on today.

First, common sense tells us new campaign laws will not do a whole lot if we do not first enforce the ones we have on our books. That is why I think the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman, has a bill today that ought to become the law of the land.

Secondly, any campaign finance ought to preserve free speech. We ought to encourage the people to be involved in this process. This is their country. They ought to be speaking out strongly for it.

So today, I predict that Shays-Meehan will pass by a comfortable margin as it did last year, and I predict that it will die the same predictable public death it did last year in the Senate, for good reasons. It is constitutionally flawed. It will not pass the Senate. It will not pass constitutional muster.

So here is my message to the Senate. When Shays-Meehan dies, as it will again, look at the Hutchinson bill. If we are serious about real reform, if we are serious about closing the soft money loophole, if we are serious about preserving free speech but letting people know more about who is financing us and pushing us back into our districts and communities to raise money rather than up here in Washington, the Hutchinson bill is real reform. It is constitutionally very sound. It makes good sense; and, more importantly, the reason we need to pass that bill is that

I am convinced the reason people do not talk about campaign finance more, it does not show up in the polls, is not that people do not want it but they have just given up hope that Congress will do something about it that we will actually do something to make life a little tougher for us up here and a little more grass-roots oriented back home. The Hutchinson bill does that. It is very important for America. I think it is very important to give hope to people to pass this bill.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, it is a great honor to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from the State of Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the senior Member of the House of Representatives who has had more experience with respect to this issue than any other Member, and cumulatively perhaps more than most of us elected.

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I hope my colleagues are listening to the people out there because if there is one thing to be heard, people think that the system is corrupt, that it is being further corrupted by money, that it is being corrupted to the point where Congress will do nothing except profit from this money.

I think it is time we do something. Let us restore the confidence of the American people to government, to this establishment, and to each of us. We are the system, and all of us are being hurt by this system.

I spent, the first election I ran, \$19,000. I have spent since then in certain elections over a million dollars. That is far too much. It is unjustifiable. It is unnecessary. It denies deserving, good candidates an opportunity to participate in the system; and, on top of that, it brings a bad smell to the election process of this country.

Just a little while back, we spent something like \$85 million in the 1997-1998 election cycle. More recently, we have spent as much as \$193 million. This time, we are going to spend \$500 million in that. That is a grotesque excess, and it is something which does neither credit nor does it build confidence in us or in the system.

I would urge my colleagues to support Shays-Meehan. It is the way to clean up the system and restore the confidence of the people.

I would also like to thank all of the Members on both sides of the aisle who have put partisanship aside and are truly interested in cleaning up the campaign financing process which has been corrupted, most notably by soft money.

This is not a partisan issue. Our national political party committees raised \$193.2 million in soft money during the 1997-1998 election cycle, more than double the \$85.3 million they raised during the last non-presidential cycle in 1993-1994. This increase is astounding and there are no signs that this trend will subside unless we act together today to stop this corruption of our election process.

I believe that those of us who benefit from the campaign system can not possibly agree on all the needed reforms. An independent commission must be created to thoroughly review the system and make recommendations to Congress regarding necessary changes. I am pleased to report that Shays-Meehan includes a provisions establishing such a commission.

Shays-Meehan is a good bill; it is a thorough bill; it is a bipartisan bill; and it is a bill that we passed last year and should pass again this year. As such, I urge my colleagues to once again vote in favor of Shays-Meehan.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF).

(Mr. METCALF asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, we have an opportunity today to pass campaign finance legislation. Shays-Meehan is the real campaign reform that can become law. Unfortunately, some amendments and substitute bills are being offered today by people opposed to Shays-Meehan because they hope that these measures will kill the bill.

We cannot afford to make changes that have the potential to split off key voting blocks and thus sink the only chance for real reform this year.

Soft money is of special concern. By closing the soft money loophole, we restore the faith of our citizens in our political process.

I am confident that we will enact real and honest campaign finance reform today.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER), co-chair of one of our largest centrist caucuses, cochairman of the New Democrats.

(Mr. ROEMER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Chairman, one of our preeminent Supreme Court justices wrote that, and I will paraphrase him, that if one does not have access to millionaires or if one is not a millionaire, they might as well not run for political office.

Alexander Hamilton pointed at this great body and said, here, sir, the people govern, the people.

We hear loud and clear from the people today that they think the current system is dominated with dialing for dollars, negative advertising, and polsters.

The Shays-Meehan bill takes some modest steps to clean this system up and restore some of the trust and confidence by looking at and regulating soft money, or sewer money, and slamming the lid on the amount of soft money that comes into campaigns and trying to get some parameters around the issue ads, or the attack and the sham ads, that dominate TV today.

So many of the American people want to turn their TV sets off and not pay any attention to the elections. Vote for Shays-Meehan for responsible and modest campaign finance reform.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time each of us has remaining?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) has 5¼ minutes. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) has 2¼ minutes. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) has 4¼ minutes. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 1½ minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD).

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, everybody has a different perspective on this; but one thing that I do know is that there is a very simple break in the track and that is some people here in this body view government as coercive and that if it grows, it will basically destroy freedom.

Other people view that, no, it is not coercive. Leave it alone. Let it grow. It is not going to impact us one way or the other.

I am a conservative. I fall into that first camp, and if someone views the government as coercive, it seems to me logical to say that they would want to limit one's ability to control the leaders of government that would affect its ability to coerce others to do other things. Tamaraz, when asked by Senator THOMPSON, why did you give all the money that you gave, his response was, because it worked.

If we look at Bernard Schwartz, who was brought up with the technology transfer with China, we can see a clear correlation between money spent and results.

So it would seem to me perfect logic to say I am a conservative, I want to limit government, and I want to limit people's ability to pull the levers of government.

We can see this, for instance, again, with the sugar subsidy. If we look at, for instance, the sugar subsidy program, it is a perfect example of how a small group is able to coerce the wheels, the machinery of government, to their own gain because that program takes a billion dollars a year in the form of higher sugar prices for all of us as consumers and it distributes it to about 60 domestic sugar producers.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT), someone who has a very personal message to convey.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, many Americans believe that our campaigns are too long and too negative. Well, my campaign for the Fourth District of Kansas election in 2000 started today.

Today, the unions, the Washington union bosses, are purchasing television time to run ads against me this very day, almost 15 months out. Too long, too negative, false and misleading ads.

Now, it started with money taken by mandatory union dues and then it filtered its way into the Washington union bosses' coffers, their pockets.

Then from there it is sent, without the permission of the employees, to support issues that in most cases a majority of the union members oppose.

Thomas Jefferson said to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagations of opinions which he does not believe is sinful and tyrannical; and yet, that is exactly what is happening today.

Campaign ads that are purchased today by the Washington union bosses will not be publicly disclosed. There will be no permission granted from the employees who contributed these funds, and there will be no public record; money taken without consent, spent on issues not reported, without any public disclosure, starting a campaign about 15 months from now.

Well, what is there in this piece of legislation that is before us that is going to prevent such injustice? What is there in Shays-Meehan that is going to correct this problem? There is nothing in here. There is no public disclosure. There are no limits on what these union bosses can say. There is nothing that they can do.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the gentleman, since it has been against the law since 1947 for union dues money to be used in campaigns and they are able to get around it through two features, one, soft money and sham issue ads, why would the gentleman not want to end those two loopholes?

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SHAYS. I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. TIAHRT. The money that is taken to run these ads comes involuntarily from union dues.

Mr. SHAYS. It is against the law.

Mr. TIAHRT. Well, currently there is a Beck decision which has been supported by the Supreme Court, but it is not enforced by the Clinton administration and yet there is nothing in the legislation of the gentleman that helps us to enforce the Beck decision.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I would say to the gentleman he is an honest and good man and when he knows the facts, he should be voting for this bill because it has been against the law since 1947 for union dues money to be used in campaigns; 1907, for corporations to be used in campaigns, and both happened because of soft money and sham issue ads.

As soon as a sham issue ad is called a campaign ad, one cannot have either corporate money or union dues money.

Given that, why will the gentleman not support the bill?

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SHAYS. I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. TIAHRT. I would say that these ads have run in the past against me and they will be running very nearly in the future, and I see nothing in the leg-

islation of the gentleman that will prevent them from occurring in the future.

Mr. SHAYS. I would like to reclaim my time and say, the gentleman needs to read the bill. The gentleman needs to read the bill. Read the bill. The bill is very clear. We ban soft money, and we call the sham issue ads what they truly are, campaign ads.

□ 1530

As soon as we call it a campaign ad, we cannot use union dues money. We cannot use corporation money.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, this is not corporation money that we are talking about.

Mr. SHAYS. Yes, we are.

I would like to ask the Chairman how much time I have left.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) has one and one-quarter minutes remaining.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume to indicate that I find it interesting that the gentleman from Connecticut will not accept language in his bill banning the use of involuntary union members' dues for political purposes, which I think is exactly the point that the gentleman from Kansas is making. Not even allowing an understanding of the fact that one does not have to contribute them and that union dues are being used in that sense.

The gentleman from Kansas I do not believe has had sufficient time to respond, and so I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT).

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, what the unions have been doing is running under the concept of political education activities, these sham ads, as the gentleman referred to as sham ads. What I think is an injustice is number one, this is money that should not be taken involuntarily. The Beck decision, if it was enforced by this administration, would stop that problem. The gentleman's legislation does not do that.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman is not correct.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, I think that is correct.

The second thing is, somehow I think that we need to have an opportunity for me to respond to this. I cannot do that under current campaign limits. I need the ability to raise the money in order to respond to these ads that are supposedly political education ads, but in truth are running to try to undermine my campaign for reelection.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) has 1¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1 minute.

I just want to explain to the gentleman that it has been against the law since 1907 for corporate treasury money to be used in campaigns and since 1947 for union dues money to be used in

campaigns. The way they do it, the way they go after you, either corporations or unions, is through soft money, because it is not called campaign money, and sham issue ads, because it is not called campaign money. We abolish both. That is the basis, the very center of our bill.

The gentleman wants to give unions permission in their union dues to do it if they agree; we do not even allow it. It has been against the law since 1947. And so, sir, it would be an impossibility for those advertisements to run against the gentleman if our legislation passed, and that is why I am so dumbfounded why the gentleman would oppose it.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1 minute.

There seems to be some confusion. The gentleman from Kansas is talking about union money that is spent for "political education." There is absolutely no limit on the use of forced union dues for registration, turnout, and political education. The advertisements are under the guise of educating union members. It is not a campaign ad; it is unlimited money for political education.

The unions have been allowed since the same 1940s to run a committee on political education, COPE, the political arm of labor unions. In this legislation, COPE is not required to open up its books; it is not required to show where and how its money is spent. The gentleman simply coddles unions at the expense of other people's ability to know where involuntary union dues, coerced by the labor bosses, are being spent.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT).

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me this time.

If it has been against the law for the unions to do this, they have done it in the past, not only in my district, but across the Nation. If it is against the law, then why today are they purchasing time to run these ads against me which are, in fact, a sham ad. They are under the guise of political education, but they will occur. There is no enforcement of the current law. I do not expect even if your law did pass, there would be any enforcement by this administration, because it does coddle the unions.

I appreciate the gentleman's conversation.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 45 seconds.

Mr. Chairman, this is really the crux of the frustration with getting campaign finance reform passed. I respect the gentleman from Kansas, and the gentleman got up and said that we had a Beck decision, which was a court decision that said the unions could not use their union dues to go to political advertisements, and then he criticized

the Clinton administration for not enforcing the Beck decision.

Well, guess what? The Shays-Meehan legislation codifies the Beck decision. It puts it into law. So if we think the Clinton administration ought to enforce the Beck decision, then vote for Shays-Meehan, because we codify the legislation.

So I think if Members, with all due respect, would look at this legislation, they would find that this is not Democratic legislation, it is not Republican legislation. It represents both sides sitting down and working together, and that is the reason why the Shays-Meehan legislation codifies the Beck decision, and that is why the gentleman from Kansas should vote for this legislation for fairer elections.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 10 seconds.

Mr. Chairman, this debate is getting a little bizarre. As the gentleman from Massachusetts well knows, the Beck decision applies to nonunion members, to those who are not members of the union. The whole point is, the coerced union dues are being spent.

I appreciate the gentleman's attempt to obfuscate the issue. It is union members, not nonunion members.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 10 seconds.

The gentleman from Kansas was talking about those monies that go to people who are part of a union that go to campaigns and they have a right to say, we do not want it to go to those campaigns. That is precisely what it is. The gentleman complained about the Clinton administration not enforcing the Beck decision, but he should vote for Shays-Meehan. Let us make it the law of the land.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA).

(Mrs. ROUKEMA asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Chairman, I am in strong support of Shays-Meehan and really appreciate this dialogue and this debate that has been going on. I strongly support Shays-Meehan.

Mr. Chairman, the rhetoric of this debate is out of control. Unconstitutional? This bill is not perfect. Let's remember the facts! Soft money is a loophole created to sabotage the constitutional and comprehensive reforms of the post Watergate Nixon Era corruption. Now we can return to reforms. The lack of fundamental change in our campaign finance practice is one of Congress' most significant failings. Clearly, our campaign finance system is out of control. The signs of impending disaster dominate the headlines every day.

But over the next several hours we will hear variations on the same theme from opponents of reform. They will say: "We are not hearing from anyone on this issue. The polls give this issue very low priority. The American people don't care about campaign finance reform." That's the refrain we will hear.

I submit that the American people do care. But they've given up on us. Is it any wonder?

They look at the way this system works—the explosion of soft money, fat cats buying access, White House coffees, the Vice-President dialing for dollars, foreign contributions, Members and Senators spending every waking moment raising cash, attack ad piled upon attack ad piled on top of attack ad.

The American people see a rigged system that serves the self-interest of the politicians already in power. They have absolutely no reason to believe that there will ever be any real reform. So to them: what's the use?

Perhaps the most corrosive development has been the explosion of so-called "soft money"—donations from wealthy corporations, individuals, labor organizations and other groups to the major parties. These funds are raised and spent outside the reach of federal election law and are directly connected to many of the scandalous practices now the focus of numerous Congressional investigations.

Of course, there are many critically important issues that we will examine during the course of this debate. The Shays-Meehan proposal addresses many of them—banning contributions on federal property, an expanded ban on franked mail, the so-called Beck regulations, issue ads, new prohibitions on foreign contributions, et cetera.

But if we do nothing else—let's ban soft money. My colleagues—soft money is at the heart of each and every one of these scandals we see in the headlines today—nights in the Lincoln Bedroom, White House coffees, alleged contributions from the Chinese military to the DNC, and more.

The Shays-Meehan bill is the only substitute amendment that contains a hard ban on soft money.

The American people are disgusted. They are totally turned off and cynical—this cynicism is forcing Americans to drop out of the political process that is our democracy.

Let's ban soft money outright. Support Shays-Meehan.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, could I inquire as to the time remaining.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) has 35 seconds remaining; the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) has 2 1/4 minutes remaining.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I think it is 2 1/2 minutes, frankly.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I thought I had 45, but that is okay.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) has 30 seconds remaining; and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) has 35 seconds remaining.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I believe under the rule I have the right to close.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California has the right to close.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I will reserve my 35 seconds.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

In closing this debate, let me just say that the whole debate should be about

restoring the public's faith in our government and their trust. Allowing elections to be bought by the highest bidder will not restore that trust, and certainly raising campaign contribution limits will not restore that trust.

To those who claim that campaigns in this decade cannot be won on just \$100, look per contributor, look at what Lawton Chiles did in Florida. He was able to win in keeping within campaign finance spending limits. The law was reformed there, and he won.

Let us bring back the people's trust in our Government. Vote against this amendment. We need limits, not increases in contribution levels.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 35 seconds.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, opponents of campaign finance reform have told us that we must protect free speech. But when they say free speech, they mean big money, because the fact is that the Shays-Meehan bill does not ban any type of communication. It merely reins in those campaign advertisements that have been masquerading as so-called issue advocacy.

According to the United States Supreme Court, communications that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate can be subject to regulation. So the question is not whether the Government should regulate campaign advertisement; it already does. The real question is whether or not the current test adequately identifies campaign advertisement; and for that, there is a simple answer: no, it does not. Let us pass Shays-Meehan.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of the time to say one of the difficult things in this debate has been that it is very personal to each and every one of us, but it gets frustrating when the facts are so clear and someone just cannot see it. The bottom line is it is illegal for corporations and unions to contribute to campaigns, except through PACs. But there is a loophole, and it is soft money and sham issue ads. We ban soft money and we call the sham issue ads what they are: campaign ads. As soon as they are campaign ads, out goes the corporate and union dues money and all of the big expenditures.

Mr. Chairman, we need a fair system. We do not limit freedom of speech. Everyone has freedom of speech. We live within the guidelines of the Supreme Court ruling.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) has 1¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, in November 1991, with 259 Republicans and Democrats

voting for it, we passed a campaign finance reform bill. It went to the Senate and 57 Senators some days later voted to send that bill to President Bush. That bill limited the amount of money in campaigns. It limited soft money. It provided for campaign finance reform. Unfortunately, that bill was vetoed.

We are now here, some 7 years later, and we have another opportunity to do what the American public expects us to do, to make their elections as honest and open as we possibly can. Is it difficult? Yes. Is it impossible? No. The Shays-Meehan perfect? Obviously not. But it is our best opportunity in this Congress to speak out on behalf of the American public's desire for clean and fair campaigns.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote for Shays-Meehan, but if we are to pass Shays-Meehan, we must also reject those amendments that will divide us, divide the consensus for this campaign finance reform bill which received just last year 252 votes in favor of it. Reject those substitutes, some on merit, some because they are designed specifically to defeat Shays-Meehan without giving the opportunity of the 435 of us who were sent here by our neighbors to vote on their behalf, to ensure that democracy is pursued in an honest fashion in this, the last best hope on the face of the Earth. I urge my colleagues to vote for Shays-Meehan and against general amendments.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

We just heard a statement that Shays-Meehan is not perfect. Obviously it is not, but we have a chance to perfect it.

We heard during this debate that we thought maybe it would be a good idea to raise hard money, given how long it has not been affected, yet the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD), who will have in front of us an amendment to raise hard money, has a letter saying "vote no on Whitfield" signed by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN). Are we to believe them on paper or believe their words?

They talked about making sure that labor union money is not involved. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) has an amendment. They are opposed to his amendment. We heard the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) complain about the fact that they did not keep in this bill something that passed the floor the last time this was in front of us in terms of foreign dollars, so now we have a chance to make it perfect, at least better than it is.

We are going through the amendment process. Let us approve the amendments they say they have no opposition to, and vote "no" on Shays-Meehan.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise to declare my strong support for the Bipartisan "Shays-Meehan" Campaign Fi-

nance Reform Act of 1999." Last year, committed members from both sides of the aisle came together to pass the Shays-Meehan Campaign Finance Reform Act and defeated the many months of complicated parliamentary procedures designed to filibuster the bill.

The fight for campaign finance reform has begun once again. Last session the House approved the Shays-Meehan bill by a resounding 252 to 179 vote with much help from my Republican colleagues. Many of whom still support reform. I urge my Republican colleagues to join us again in this stride toward a fairer, more just system of financing campaigns.

The purpose of this Shays-Meehan bill is to cut off the flow of unlimited and often undisclosed money into the federal election system. To do that—the Shays-Meehan bill closes the two primary loopholes through which this money flows into federal campaigns, soft money and sham issues.

This Bill makes four major changes to our campaign financing system: (1) It completely eliminates federal soft money, as well as state soft money that influences a federal election and increases the aggregate hard dollar contribution limit from \$25,000 to \$30,000; (2) it strengthens the definition of "express advocacy" to include radio and TV ads that refer to a clearly identified federal candidate, run within 60 days of an election; (3) it requires FEC reports to be filed electronically, and provides for Internet posts of this and other disclosure data and (4) it establishes a Commission to study further reforms to our campaign systems.

According to the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, between \$275 and 340 million was spent in broadcast issue advocacy in 1997–1998, compared to \$135 to \$150 million in 1995–1996. Mr. Chairman, this statistical information is evidence that Campaign Finance Reform is needed.

Last year a growing number of Campaign Finance Reformist Republicans exercised their better judgement and fought against the Republican Leadership's attempt to thwart attempts to eliminate soft money that influences federal elections. The role of soft money in elections is growing exponentially. So far this year, the parties have raised a record \$55.1 million in soft money—that is 80 percent more than the \$30.6 million they raised during a comparable period in 1995. I urge my Republican colleagues and others to come forth again in support to strike a balance for real Campaign Finance Reform.

If Congress wants to be remembered for improving our nation's political system, enhancing our moral quality of life, and building a better America, then let's pass real campaign finance reform. Mr. Chairman, fellow colleagues, I urge that you vote No on all the poison pill amendments and vote Yes on the Shays-Meehan bill.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 417, the Shays/Meehan Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 1999.

The bill has flaws, the biggest of which is that it does not go far enough. I would have preferred it impose spending limits and greater restraints on political action committees—the so-called PACs.

Never-the-less, Shays/Meehan is a significant and long overdue effort at addressing the most pressing "democratic" issue facing the nation.

In a country where process is our most important product, what is true for sports is doubly so for politics—how the game is played matters.

Lincoln's government of, by and for the people cannot be one in which influence is disproportionately wrought by those with large campaign war chests.

A fitting corollary to Lord Acton's dictum that "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely" is the precept that even more corrupting than aspiring to power is the fear of losing it. This survivalist instinct, the desire to hang on to power, is the principle reason why meaningful campaign finance reform has been so difficult to advance.

The current system is an incumbent-based monopoly that rewards accommodation rather than confrontation with special interests. Campaign reform is about empowering citizens rather than influence peddlers. It is the equivalent of applying the antitrust laws to the political parties.

Without the sort of reforms Shays/Meehan makes, Congress will increasingly become a legislative body where the small businessman, the farmer, the worker, and the ordinary citizen are only secondarily represented.

The time is long passed to infuse more democracy into our democratic system.

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to express my strong support for the Shays-Meehan Bill, H.R. 417. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 417 and ask unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot blame the American people for believing that their elected officials might be for sale.

H.R. 417 would restrict the vast amounts of so-called "soft money" which allow special interest groups to have unfair influence on our electoral process.

We also need to explore ways to make political campaigns less costly, while still allowing candidates to convey their message.

H.R. 417 would establish an Independent Commission on Campaign Finance Reform, and I hope the commission can recommend ways to reduce the cost of campaigns.

Mr. Chairman, we need to restore public trust in their electoral process. H.R. 417 is the best way I know to accomplish this.

Now I want to address remarks to my colleagues who are Pro-Life advocates and who, like me, support Shays-Meehan.

Much has been made about the strong position taken by the National Right to Life Committee against Shays-Meehan.

The NRLC, like some other issue advocacy groups, believes Shays-Meehan bill would unfairly inhibit their ability to communicate their message.

Pro-Life Members of Congress who support Shays-Meehan have an honest disagreement with NRLC about this bill, but we share common ground with NRLC about the sanctity of human life.

I do not quibble with the National Right to Life Committee's position on Shays-Meehan.

However, the NRLC has chosen to "score" our votes on Shays-Meehan.

Simply put, Shays-Meehan is about spending money on political campaigns. It is not about protecting human life.

Defenders of the sanctity of life should be able to have honest disagreements from time to time without losing focus on the goal that unites us.

But this "apples-to-oranges" linkage of campaign reform to protecting human life implies to our constituents that we are less than 100% committed to the cause of protecting human life when that is simply not the case.

I want my colleagues and the American people to know the plain truth: My record in support of human life is clear. I am committed 100% to Life, no matter how the NRLC may characterize my record after today's votes on campaign reform.

Indeed, I am proud that my colleagues have recognized my commitment to Life by asking me to serve as Democratic Whip of the Pro-Life Caucus.

Although the National Right to Life Committee disagrees with Pro-Life members of Congress who support Shays-Meehan, I hope we can have a productive relationship with NRLC or anyone else who is willing to fight for Life.

We are all on the same team and we must not let other issues distract us from our goal.

But today, Mr. Chairman, we are talking about restoring public confidence in the American electoral process.

We need to pass Shays-Meehan.

Mr. BENTSEN, Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 417, the Meehan-Shays Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 1999.

Mr. Speaker, this body has once again been presented with the opportunity to implement significant campaign finance reforms. The American people have grown weary and cynical of the constant money chase we must engage in to run for office. Some try to equate placing restrictions on soft money with placing restrictions on free speech, as if money was speech. Money talks, all right. But how can the quiet voices and concerns of the American people compete with the megaphone of millions in soft money that is funneled into campaigns? I would argue that wealthy individuals, large corporations and advocacy groups do not have a greater right to be heard than average citizens just because they can afford to buy chunks of TV advertising time slots. This soft money is unregulated, unlimited, and unconscionable. We have to show the American people that public policy is not for sale. That's why I support the Meehan-Shays legislation. This legislation will regulate the flow of soft money to both parties and will close the legal loopholes which allow very dubious issue advocacy ads to permeate campaigns.

In addition, the bill provides for the establishment of an Independent Commission on Campaign Finance Reform and will protect the continued use of voter guides as method to inform voters about their Representatives position on important issues. The bill also raises the individual campaign contribution level from \$25,000 to \$30,000 each year, and raises the amount individuals may give to state political parties from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each year. Labor unions will be required to give "reasonable notice" to dues-paying non-members of their right to disallow political use of their dues. Electronic filing to the Federal Election Committee (FEC) would be required, it is currently optional.

Unfortunately Mr. Chairman, the Majority has decided to ignore the will of the American people who want real campaign finance reform and is attempting to kill this vital legislation by amendment. The amendments and substitutes which we debate today, while well intentioned, will do nothing to reform our cam-

paign finance system. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to oppose all amendments and substitutes to this legislation.

Passage of this bill would represent major progress in halting the influence of wealthy special interests in government.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, to me, one of the privileges of being a Member of the House, is the ability to come here to Washington to do the people's work without losing that all-important connection with the people who sent us here.

While we serve to make all of America a better place, our constituencies are still small enough that we can put our finger on the pulse of the needs and desires of the people back home.

But a lot of those people back home, unfortunately, don't feel as connected to us as they really are, or should be. Like most Americans, our constituents believe that most Members of Congress are bound to special interests because of campaign contributions, large sums of money generated by corporations, labor unions and political action committees, and as an investigation of President Clinton's 1996 campaign fundraising has shown, even foreign nationals.

For most of us, the belief of our constituents may in reality only be a perception, but the perception holds strong and affects all of us. It is high time we do something to erase this perception and implement the first campaign finance reforms America has seen since 1974.

Americans need to be reassured that their elected leaders serve to represent their best interests, not the whims of some special interests. Our constituents must have absolute confidence in the fairness of our political process and loopholes in the current rules must be closed for good.

We can restore credibility and faith in the political process by passing H.R. 417, the Shays-Meehan Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act, of which I am proud to be an original cosponsor.

H.R. 417 makes four major changes to our campaign financing system:

H.R. 417 bans soft money: Shays-Meehan completely eliminates Federal soft money, as well as state soft money that influences a Federal election.

H.R. 417 recognizes sham issue ads for what they really are: campaign ads. Under Shays-Meehan, within 60 days of an election only legal, "hard" dollars could be used for radio and TV ads that refer to a clearly identified Federal candidate run; furthermore, any communication, run at any time, that contains unambiguous and unmistakable support for or opposition to a clearly identified Federal candidate must be paid for with "hard" dollars.

H.R. 417 improves Federal Election Commission (FEC) disclosure and enforcement. Shays-Meehan requires FEC reports to be filed electronically, and provides for Internet posting of this and other disclosure data.

H.R. 417 establishes a Commission to study further reforms to our campaign finance system.

In addition, Shays-Meehan reforms also clarifies that it is illegal to raise not only hard money—but soft money as well—from foreign nationals or to raise money on government property; expands the ban on unsolicited "franked" mass mailings from the current three months before a general election to six months; bans coordinated party contributions

to candidates who spend more than \$50,000 in personal funds on their own campaigns; establishes a clearinghouse of information within the FEC and strengthens FEC enforcement as well as the penalties for violating the foreign money ban. Shays-Meehan also clearly exempts educational voter guides.

Mr. Chairman, today both of our political parties are guilty of working in a system that is more "loophole than law."

In the words of my friend, the gentleman from Connecticut who continues to be the driving force behind the reform move in the House, "If we allow the status quo to continue, and stand by as . . . interest groups are shaken down by the political parties, the cherished ideals that bind our national identity—free elections; one person, one vote—become meaningless."

Mr. Chairman, let us show all Americans that their one vote is not meaningless, and that their active involvement in our political process is more valuable to us than any dollar amount could ever be.

As the New York Times concluded in its editorial yesterday, today "the House faces a test of its Members' sincerity and of whether it is listening to the public instead of special interest donors."

Who will we listen to, Mr. Chairman? To me, it's clear. I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 417.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Shays-Meehan legislation. I commend the sponsors for their efforts to clean up our broken campaign finance system, and I believe they are sincere in their efforts.

However, while the Shays-Meehan bill makes some needed changes, it fails to go far enough in addressing what I believe are real problems with our current campaign finance system. Shays-Meehan fails to address the underlying problems of special interest influence, foreign influence and built-in incumbent advantages that plague our current system. Moreover, soft money provision, while well-intentioned, raise serious Constitutional concerns. Most seriously, the bill does nothing to address the problem posed by special interest PACs, which contribute overwhelmingly to incumbents and discourage individuals from getting involved in the political process.

During the last Congress, I introduced campaign finance legislation containing limitations and increased disclosure for soft money, and other key provisions that go further than the Shays-Meehan bill. Among other features, the Restoring Trust in Government Act would have: banned the activities of special interest Political Action Committees (PACs); required 60% of campaign funds to be raised within a House candidate's district or a Senate candidate's state; clearly prohibited contributions by non-citizens; limited the "bundling" of campaign contributions; and completely banned taxpayer-financed unsolicited mass mailings by Members of Congress.

I believe these are all common sense changes that deserve consideration in the context of campaign finance reform.

Mr. Chairman, ultimately, I believe is virtually impossible for even the best intentioned incumbent Members of Congress to make truly sensible changes to the campaign finance system that helped them to get elected. That's why I would support the establishment of an independent commission—with a majority of members coming from outside of govern-

ment—to study the problems of our current campaign financing system and make recommendations for reform within a very specific timeline. These recommendations would then be submitted to Congress for a simple yes or no vote, similar to the way we handled the difficult issue of base closures.

I know commissions have a checkered history in Washington, but they can work if they are given the opportunity. I know from my own experience as co-chairman of the National Commission on Restructuring the IRS, which recommended a successful package of IRS reforms that ultimately passed Congress and were signed into law. I would also add that, if we had taken the step of establishing a non-partisan campaign finance commission when we had the chance last year, we would be considering a nonpartisan commission's report today, instead of essentially the same Shays-Meehan legislation that failed to pass the Senate last year.

If we're really serious about campaign finance reform, I believe we have no choice but to take it *out* of the political process entirely. I hope, when we next consider campaign finance reform, we will have the courage to support real campaign finance reform that can be enacted into law.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, campaign finance reform is once again being painted as the solution to political corruption in Washington. Indeed, political corruption is a problem, but today's reformers hardly offer a solution. The real problem is that government has too much influence over our economy and lives, creating a tremendous incentive to protect one's own interests by 'investing' in politicians. The problem is not a lack of federal laws, or rules regulating campaign spending, therefore more laws won't help. We hardly suffer from too much freedom. Any effort to solve the campaign finance problem with more laws will only make things worse by further undermining the principles of liberty and private property ownership.

The reformers are sincere in their effort to curtail special interest influence on government, but this cannot be done while ignoring the control government has assumed over our lives and economy. Current reforms address only the symptoms while the root cause of the problem is ignored. Since reform efforts involve regulating political speech through control of political money, personal liberty is compromised. Tough enforcement of spending rules will merely drive the influence underground since the stakes are too high and much is to be gained by exerting influence over government—legal or not. The more open and legal campaign expenditures are, with disclosure, the easier it is for voters to know who's buying influence from whom.

There's tremendous incentive for every special interest group to influence government. Every individual, bank or corporation that does business with government invests plenty in influencing government. Lobbyists spend over a hundred million dollars per month trying to influence Congress. Taxpayers dollars are endlessly spent by bureaucrats in their effort to convince Congress to protect their own empires. Government has tremendous influence over the economy, and financial markets through interest rate controls, contracts, regulations, loans, and grants. Corporations and others are 'forced' to participate in the process out of greed as well as self-defense—since

that's the way the system works. Equalizing competition and balancing power such as between labor and business is a common practice. As long as this system remains in place, the incentive to buy influence will continue.

Many reformers recognize this and either like the system or believe that it's futile to bring about changes and argue that curtailing influence is the only option left even if it involves compromising the liberty of political speech through regulating political money.

It's naive to believe stricter rules will make a difference. If enough honorable men and women served in Congress and resisted the temptation to be influenced by any special interest group, of course this whole discussion would be unnecessary. Because Members do yield to the pressure, the reformers believe that more rules regulating political speech will solve the problem.

The reformers argue that it's only the fault of those trying to influence government and not the fault of the Members who yield to the pressure or the system that generates the abuse. This allows Members of Congress to avoid assuming responsibility for their own acts and instead places the blame on those who exert pressure on Congress through the political process which is a basic right bestowed on all Americans. The reformer's argument is "stop us before we succumb to the special interest groups."

Politicians unable to accept this responsibility clamor for a system that diminishes the need for politicians to persuade individuals and groups to donate money to their campaign. Instead of persuasion they endorse coercing taxpayers to finance campaigns.

This only changes the special interest groups that control government policy. Instead of voluntary groups making their own decisions with their own money, politicians and bureaucrats dictate how political campaigns will be financed. Not only will politicians and bureaucrats gain influence over elections, other nondeservers will benefit. Clearly, incumbents will greatly benefit by more controls over campaign spending—a benefit to which the reformers will never admit.

The media becomes a big winner. Their influence grows as private money is regulated. It becomes more difficult to refute media propaganda, both print and electronic, when directed against a candidate if funds are limited. Campaigns are more likely to reflect the conventional wisdom and candidates will strive to avoid media attacks by accommodating their views.

The wealthy gain a significant edge since it's clear candidates can spend unlimited personal funds in elections. This is a big boost for the independently wealthy candidates over the average challenger who needs to raise and spend large funds to compete.

Celebrities will gain even a greater benefit than they already enjoy. Celebrity status is money in the bank and by limiting the resources to counter-balance this advantage, works against the non-celebrity who might be an issue-oriented challenger.

This current reform effort ignores the legitimate and moral "political action committees" that exist only for good reasons and do not ask for any special benefit from government. The immoral "political action committees" that work only to rip-off the taxpayers by getting benefits from government may deserve our condemnation but not the heavy hand of government anxious to control this group along

with all the others. The reformers see no difference between the two and are willing to violate all personal liberty. Since more regulating doesn't address the basic problem of influential government, now out of control, neither groups deserves more coercive government rules. All the rules in the world can't prevent members from yielding to political pressure of the groups that donate to their campaigns. Regulation cannot instill character.

Additionally, the legislative debate over campaign finance reform has seemingly focused upon the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech, as interpreted and applied by the courts. The constitutional issues, however, are not limited to the First Amendment. To the contrary, pursuant to their oaths of office, members of Congress have an independent duty to determine the constitutionality of legislation before it and to decide, before ever reaching the First Amendment, whether they have been vested by the Constitution with any authority, at all, to regulate federal election campaigns. Congress has no authority except that which is "granted" in the Constitution. Thus, the threshold question concerning H.R. 417 is whether the Constitution has conferred upon Congress any authority to regular federal election campaigns. The authority to regulate such campaigns is not found among any enumerated power conferred upon Congress.

More regulation of political speech through control of private money, without addressing the subject of influential government only drives the money underground, further giving a select group an advantage over the honest candidate who only wants smaller government.

True reform is not possible without changing the role of government, which now exists to regulate, tax, subsidize, and show preferential treatment. Only changing the nature of government will eliminate the motive for so many to invest so much in the political process. But we should not make a bad situation worse by passing more bad laws.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 417, the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 1999, and to oppose all of the cynical "poison pill" amendments that have been introduced to undermine support for this important legislation. H.R. 417 contains a number of essential reforms to our federal system of financial elections in our political system.

Mr. Chairman, I commend our distinguished colleagues, my friend Mr. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS of Connecticut and Mr. MARTIN MEEHAN of Massachusetts, for introducing this extremely important bill.

The most significant provision of the Campaign Finance Reform Act would effectively ban unregulated "soft money" from our political process, abolishing once and for all this legal loophole through which hundreds of millions of dollars are poured into our national electoral process every election cycle. Soft money has made a mockery of our existing campaign finance laws, which are permitting big money interests to exert a massively disproportionate influence upon the selection of our nation's president, as well as congressman and senators. This is wrong and it must be stopped.

The Campaign Finance Reform Act would also regulate sham issue ads, which are truly campaign expenditures. The use of such

"issue ads" is a gaping hole in our election laws. This law would improve the disclosure and enforcement capabilities of the Federal Election Commission, and it would establish an independent commission to study further reforms that may be needed in order to help us make future necessary changes in our campaign finance system.

Mr. Chairman, this same legislation was adopted by the House of Representatives during the 105th Congress with the overwhelming support of the American people. Despite the popular demand for reform, those members who are defending our hopelessly flawed campaign finance system continue to use "Delay" and obstruction tactics to undermine the prospects for the passage of H.R. 417. These opponents of comprehensive reform—unfortunately with the backing of the Republican leadership—are sponsoring seven "poison pill" amendments to divide the coalition supporting the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act. I urge my colleagues to reject these transparent gimmicks and to vote to restore American citizens' trust in the "People's House." Our constituents deserve as much.

Mr. Chairman, I submit an editorial from this morning's Washington Post which, I believe, effectively sets forth the strong case for the passage of H.R. 417. I urge all of my colleagues to give attention to this very thoughtful opinion.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 14, 1999]

YES TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The House has what ought to be an easy vote today—"yes" on campaign finance reform. The bill the reluctant Republican leadership has finally brought to the floor passed by a vote of 252 to 179 in the last Congress. Most of the same members are back. The need is, if anything, greater; they have no reason to renege.

The modest measure, by Reps. Christopher Shays and Martin Meehan, seeks to halt only the most egregious of the fund-raising abuses that flourished in the last campaign. It would bar the use of the national party organizations to raise and spend, on behalf of their candidates, "soft" money that the candidates are forbidden by law to raise and spend themselves. It seeks to limit the use of other, nominally independent organizations to raise and spend such money in the form of "issue ads" as well.

The leadership, having been forced by threat of a discharge petition to let the bill on the floor, has sprinkled obstacles in its path. Ten amendments will be in order. They were carefully written to sound innocuous while either weakening the bill or poisoning it for Democrats who might then relieve the Republicans of responsibility by taking the lead in voting no. One purports to defend voter guides but, as written, would likely make all issue ads unassailable. One, of dubious constitutionality, would require candidates to raise half their contributions in their home states; its adoption would likely drive Democrats from low-income districts to reject the entire bill. Everyone understands this. The amendments should be voted down, as should the three substitutes that will then also be in order. They too are weaker than the bill. One, by Rep. Bill Thomas, is a deliberate nullity, the theory being that no one will bother to vote against it. But if any of these passes, the underlying bill is dead. That too is well understood.

The bill that passed last year was deflected by the Republican leadership in the Senate. This one faces similar resistance. It is a subject that, more than any other, causes hy-

pocrisy to flower. The president, whose flagrant circumvention of the law in 1996 helped prompt the legislation, now takes the lead in supporting it. The Republicans, meanwhile, having spent the better part of the last Congress rightly denouncing his behavior, now block the bill that would outlaw it; they, it turns out, are the ones who profit most from the system they deplore. The parties are raising far more soft money in this cycle than they did in the last. The campaign finance law has pretty well ceased to exist, except on paper. Shays-Meehan would begin to restore it. That's what this vote is about.

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (H.R. 417). First, I would like to commend my colleagues, Representatives CHRISTOPHER SHAYS and MARTIN T. MEEHAN, for the extraordinary amount of hard work they put forth to bring this bill before us today. It is a testament to their diligence and tenacity that they have successfully defeated the obstacles that have been placed in the way of this important legislation.

I believe that it is time to change the nature of today's political campaigns. Working people are losing their voice in the political process, and losing faith in their officials because their vote is being drowned in a sea of negative attack ads. These reforms would tighten the campaign finance laws to keep outside groups from running sham ads, and reduce the impact of obscure, faceless groups and their money on our elections. I believe that this bill is a bipartisan effort to restore faith in our Government, which is why it is one of the first bills I co-sponsored.

I have been in politics for many years and I know that too much money is spent in political campaigns, and real people are losing their voice in elections. We need to bring campaigns back to the basics so that big money influences are put in check, and unregulated "soft" money is taken out of politics.

Many people are distrustful of the political process, and rightfully so. They don't vote in elections because major outside groups and parties have too much leverage. This reform bill is a bipartisan effort to restore faith in our Government and open up the political system. This measure aggressively targets the big money in politics and brings campaigns back to the people. These reforms are responsible, logical, and best of all, workable within our current system. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support the Shays-Meehan bill and vote against the many "poison-pill" amendments that have been allowed to be offered today.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Chairman, today, the House of Representatives decides whether elections will continue to be controlled by a wealthy and powerful elite, or whether a significant curb on their hold over the American political process will be put in place.

H.R. 417, the Shays-Meehan Campaign Finance reform bill will help to give elections back to the people by curbing the influence of the moneyed interests.

Do not be fooled by the amendments offered today. They are intended to gut the Shays-Meehan Campaign Finance Reform bill. The rules of today's debate were designed to undermine real campaign finance reform with a series of poor substitutes.

The real test of whether this House supports campaign finance reform or thwarts it is this: we must defeat all substitute amendments and

poison pill amendments, and then we must pass Shays-Meehan.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Chairman, let's concentrate on constituent interests, not special interests.

As the great political reporter Theodore White wrote, "the flood of money that gushes into politics today is a pollution of democracy." I haven't accepted PAC contributions since I first ran for the Michigan state senate in 1982. Although I knew I would always vote the way I felt was right regardless of who donated to my campaign, I also knew that it was equally important that my constituents had no doubts about how much PAC lobbyists might be influencing my decisions.

I have reintroduced my bill from the 105th Congress, the PAC Limitation Act, which would do the following:

Ban PACs from donating to individual Congressional campaigns.

Require that Congressional candidates raise 50% or more of their contributions from individual donors who reside within their district.

Limit how much and how often individuals can make soft money contributions to political party organizations.

Require that TV, radio and cable stations report the placement of issue ads so that there will be full disclosure.

Require labor organizations to obtain the written permission of members before using any dues or fees for political purposes.

Special interests with their organized lobbying and their millions of dollars of PAC persuasion money have gained undue influence in Congress. It is time to start dismantling that influence.

This legislation moves the process ahead.

Mr. WU. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to help restore the trust of the American people. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 417, the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act, and urge my colleagues to pass this legislation today. I also urge my colleagues to reject any and all poison pill amendments intended to destroy the underlying bill.

As a first-time candidate for public office, I saw from a private citizen's perspective the need to reform our country's campaign finance system. I believe very strongly in this issue—we need to overhaul the way that campaigns are financed in America. Shortly after coming to Congress, I signed a letter with many of my freshman colleagues urging swift consideration and passage of the Shays-Meehan legislation. There are numerous cracks in our current campaign finance system, many of which create a complex web that ultimately discourage public participation. I believe that Shays-Meehan will help empower the American people and rebuild some of the trust that has been eroded by our campaign finance process.

While it is not perfect, Shays-Meehan takes important steps toward restoring the public's faith in government. It makes a number of serious reforms to bring more sunshine into the process, including banning soft money contributions and imposing restrictions on so-called "issue ads." Moreover, the Shays-Meehan bill will encourage other important and sensible reforms, such as requiring electronic filing of FEC reports and the disclosure of candidate information in campaign advertisements.

Opponents of the Shays-Meehan legislation believe there should be more special interest money in politics, not less. Opponents also

raise objections to individual provisions wholly because they believe parts of H.R. 417 would jeopardize their own individual election or weaken their party. I believe that the time has come to serve the interests of the Americans people, focus on reducing the influence of special interests in our political system, and improve the campaign finance system in our country. Congress belongs to the people.

Unfortunately, in a recent poll, over half of all Americans did not believe Abraham Lincoln's statement that America is a government "of, by, and for the people." Every member of this body should be humbled by this finding, and every member of this body should vote for Shays-Meehan. I urge all my colleagues to vote for the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act and restore the public trust.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Chairman, in the 1996 presidential campaign, our nation witnessed the most scandalous money chase since the glory days of the big-city bosses and the robber barons. The question we now face is whether we have the will to clean up and toughen our laws or whether we will just accept practices like auctioning off the Lincoln bedroom or allowing foreign governments and corporations to pump money into our political campaigns.

The time for campaign reform is now. I support H.R. 417, the Shays-Meehan legislation for comprehensive reform of our campaign finance laws.

The Shays-Meehan bill bans political parties and Federal officials from raising or spending any so-called "soft" money. Congress thought it had banned "soft money" decades ago. In our democracy, we must not permit unlimited, unregulated contributions directly from corporations, unions or wealthy individuals. If a candidate took soft money today, that candidate would be indicted. But the loophole is that party committees have become giant money laundromats that collect and cleanse this otherwise-illegal money. Our legislation stops this game.

The bill also ends sham issue-ads. These TV ads rip a candidate to shreds and then ask: "Let him know what you think." Since the ad never explicitly says "vote against so-and-so" the current law says these are "educational issue ads" and not campaign ads. That is baloney. These ads are purely political and often the most vicious. They should be forced to abide by the same rules that bind every candidate—full disclosure of all contributions. That is what our bill requires.

This is sound and sensible legislation. Let's pass it. Let's send it to the Senate, which must give it the time and attention it deserves this year. Honest campaigns and elections are the most basic safeguard of a democracy. Every right that we have flows from the right to decide who will govern us. We need to decide now whether our elections will be governed by law or manipulated by loophole.

□ 1545

The CHAIRMAN. All time has expired.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to review an agreement that we have made about the way we proceed with the amendment in the voting.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair does not understand the gentleman's statement.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 1 minute.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. MEEHAN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Chairman, I would ask the gentleman what this is going to be.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEHAN. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, what I was going to do is inform the House and Members the procedure we are going to be following through the amending process and the substitution process so Members can plan for the rest of the evening.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Chairman, there has been an agreement among us that we are now going into the amendment process to H.R. 417, following general debate. There are 10 amendments. Each is to be considered for 10 minutes.

We have agreed that we will deal with five at a time and then ask for a vote. That would be a 15-minute vote followed by four five-minute votes. Then we would take the second block of five amendments, and then have a vote of 15 and then four 5s. Then we would move through the substitutes. Each of those have 40 minutes, with a vote following each substitute, which would, of course, then require a 15-minute vote for those.

So after five amendments there will be a block of voting, and then at the end of the next five amendments there would be a block of voting.

Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) having assumed the chair, Mr. HOBSON, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 417) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to reform the financing of campaigns for elections for Federal office, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2490, TREASURY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. KOLBE submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 2490) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes: